cubic metres of fuel wood, valued at about Rs. 10,000 crores, are annually wasted due to faulty logging techniques and that about 24 per cent of the total forest area classified as potentially exploitable is not being exploited for the lack of infrastrucural development as reported in the 'Indian Express' dated May 7, 1986; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and to what extent the national economy is likely to gain if the 24 per cent land is also exploited?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): (a) It is not a fact that 5 million cubic metres of industrial wood and 18 million cubic metres of fuel wood, valued at Rs. 10,000 crores are wasted annually due to faulty logging techniques.

(b) There are no plans to increase forest areas under exploitation because of conservation needs, which outweigh purely economic gains.

Spy activities in Gujarat oilfields

*408. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent revealing information in an open letter of the Nationalist Citizen Forum New Delhi and if so, whether this is being investigated; and

(b) whether Government are also aware of the earlier very serious disclosures by a senior Government servant regarding the spy activities in Gujarat oilfields centred round dubious foreign aided projects at Anand Butteroil Depots etc.?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) With regard to part (a) of the Question, in the absence of specific particulars such as the date, the name of the addresses etc. it has not been possible to have any clear idea about the 'open letter of the Nationalist Citizen Forum, New Delhi'. As regards part (b) of the question, the matter appears to pertain to an article published in the International Courier of March, 1985. The allegation could not however, be substantiated.

Increasing number of weapons and firearms with citizens

*409. SHRI THANGABAALU: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the context of the recent riots in different parts of the country Government are contemplating measures to reduce the level and the number of private weapons like knives, daggers and firearms with the public; and

(b) whether the Central Government propose to take up with the States the issue of increasing number of weapons and firearms for the citizens in some States?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) The Central Government have been seriously concerned with the commission of offences with the help of arms|firearms. A number of measures have been initiated in order to ensure that possession of firearms is permitted only in case of bonafide needs such as sports|self-production. In order to achieve this objective, the following measures have been taken.

(i) Under the Arms Act and Rules, the State Governments|Union Territories and their officers are the licensing authorities for grant of possssion licences for arms and firearms. By the Arms (Amendment) Act, 1983 (25 of 1983) the maxixmum number of firearms a person can possess has been restricted.

(ii) Police verification has been made mandatory before grant of licence by insertion of new Section 13(2) by Arms (Amendment) Act, 1983 (25 of 1983).

(iii) To tackle the situation in disturbed areas, section 24-A for prohibition as to possession of notified arms in disturbed areas and Section 24-B for prohibition as to carrying of notified arms in or through public places in disturbed areas have been incorporated in